作文《菜园》让我想起外婆

语文老师布置了一篇作文，题目叫《菜园》。我坐在桌前想了半个钟头，纸上只写了个题目。要写菜园，得先有菜园可写；我家住十六楼，楼下是停车场，我上哪儿去看菜园。

奶奶看我咬着笔杆，说：你去阳台看看你自己种的那盆小葱。我去看了。那盆葱是我三月种的，现在稀稀拉拉七八根，有一根还抽了薹。我蹲在盆前看，看着看着，想到的不是这盆葱，是外婆的菜园。

外婆的菜园在屋后，比学校操场小一点，什么都有。番茄熟的时候我偷摘，专挑最红的，攥在手里，走到墙根才敢咬，汁从指缝往下淌。外婆不骂，只说慢点，籽还没长硬，吃多了肚子疼。井里镇着西瓜，绳头拴在井栏上，我趴着往井里看，凉气一股一股往上冒，外婆一提，西瓜上全是水珠。

我还帮外婆烧过灶。她在地里摘，我蹲灶前添柴，烟熏出来眼泪直流，她回头看我一眼就笑了，说烧火都不会，长大还得了。她说完还是自己添柴，让我挪到门口去坐。

外婆走了八年。她的菜园还在，舅舅接着种，去年视频里我看见番茄架还支着，井栏上拴绳的铁环还亮。我坐在十六楼的阳台上，对着一盆稀稀拉拉的葱，忽然明白作文该怎么写。我写外婆的手，指甲缝里有洗不掉的土；写番茄攥在手里的温度；写井里的凉气；写灶膛的火把外婆的侧脸照得忽明忽暗。写了一千字，全是手上的事，没有一句大道理。

第二天作文本发下来，老师在末尾写：细节是真的，有生活。我把这句话念给奶奶听。奶奶说：那就对了，你外婆要是听见，准夸你。我点点头，没接话。菜园是个念想，外婆走了八年，可我一想起那个园子，她就回来，站在畦边，回头看我一眼，就笑。

The Essay About the Garden Reminds Me of Grandma

The Chinese teacher assigned an essay titled My Garden. I sat at the desk for half an hour and wrote only the title on the paper. To write about a garden, one must first have a garden to write about. Our home is on the sixteenth floor, the ground below is a parking lot. Where could I go to see a garden.

Grandma saw me chewing the pen and said: go to the balcony and look at the pot of scallions you planted yourself. I went and looked. I planted that pot in March; now there are seven or eight sparse stalks, and one of them has sent up a flower stalk. I squatted before the pot, and while looking, what came to me was not this pot but the garden of my maternal grandmother.

Her garden was behind the house, a little smaller than the school playground, with everything in it. When the tomatoes ripened I picked them without asking, choosing only the reddest, clutching them, and only dared to bite once I reached the wall, juice running down between my fingers. She did not scold, only said: slow down, the seeds are not hard yet, eat too many and your belly will ache. The watermelon was

cooled in the well, its rope tied to the well rim. I lay on my belly and peered down; cold air rose in waves; she lifted it up and the melon was covered with water beads.

I also helped her at the stove. She picked in the field; I squatted at the stove feeding firewood, smoke stinging tears down my face. She glanced back at me and laughed, saying: cannot even burn a fire, what will you do when you grow up. After saying it she still fed the wood herself and moved me to sit by the door.

She has been gone eight years. Her garden is still there; my uncle keeps planting in it. Last year on a video call I saw the tomato stakes still standing, and the iron ring on the well rim still shining. Sitting on the balcony on the sixteenth floor, facing a sparse pot of scallions, I suddenly understood how the essay should be written. I wrote about her hands, soil in the seams of her nails that never washed off; the warmth of a tomato clutched in the hand; the cold air rising from the well; the stove fire lighting her side face bright and dim by turns. I wrote a thousand words, all of it things the hands know, not one line of grand reasoning.

Next day the essay books came back. The teacher wrote at the end: the details are real, there is life in this. I read the line to Grandma. She said: then it is right; if your grandmother heard it, she would surely praise you. I nodded and did not reply. A garden is a keepsake. She has been gone eight years, but the moment I think of that garden, she comes back, standing by the ridge, turning to look at me, and smiling.